

2 FAM 1200 ACTION AND CLEARANCE PROCEDURES

2 FAM 1210 GENERAL PROCESSING

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

2 FAM 1211 PRINCIPLES

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

a. "Action" and "clearance" are the processes by which the Department makes decisions. The processes place responsibility for action upon one office while insuring that the information and opinions of other offices are brought to bear on the proposed action.

b. If action is frustrated by over burdensome clearances, the results can be as bad as if no coordination had been attempted. The action office should consult widely but give the right of clearance only to those offices with a substantial interest in the proposed action.

c. The action office, as a part of its responsibility for completing action, has the duty to overcome delays and, if necessary, to present a matter for final decision without the concurrence or dissent of a delaying office.

2 FAM 1212 ASSIGNMENT OF ACTION

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

Action responsibility is assigned on the basis of the division of responsibilities set forth in 1 FAM, Organization and Functions, other guides

(1) by the Foreign Affairs Information Management Center for airgrams and other correspondence,

(2) by the Office of Communications for telegrams, and

(3) by the Executive Secretariat or an originating office.

Any office may propose to the action office a change of action responsibility.

2 FAM 1213 RESPONSIBILITY OF ACTION OFFICE

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

Action responsibility is the responsibility for insuring the completion of all steps on an issue within the scope of the Department's authority. The action office shall:

- a. Prepare an action document after consulting the necessary materials and person.
- b. Determine clearance points. Clearance points may not add or delete clearances without the approval of the action office.
- c. Make the initial determination as to where the final decision shall be made.
- d. Obtain clearances.
- e. Overcome delays and, if necessary, present the matter to higher authority for decision without the concurrence or dissent of a delaying office.

2 FAM 1214 CLEARANCE OR ADVICE

2 FAM 1214.1 Clearance

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

Clearances should be obtained from an office which has a substantial interest in a proposed action. A clearing office may concur in or dissent from the proposed action. If a dissent is not reconciled, the action office shall submit the proposed action and the dissent for decision to an authority superior to both offices.

2 FAM 1214.2 Advice

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

An office which has only a collateral interest, for example, one which has useful information or views to contribute but whose field of responsibility is not vitally affected by the proposed action, should be consulted without being included in the clearance process. The action office is not bound to accept such advice and may complete action without submitting it to higher authority.

2 FAM 1215 METHODS OF OBTAINING CLEARANCE

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

Clearances may be obtained by:

- a. Moving the complete file through each of the clearing units.

This shall be the standard practice.

- b. Sending duplicate copies of the action document with essential explanation material to all clearing units simultaneously.

- c. Seeking telephone clearances. This method shall be used only when the matter is already well understood by the clearing officer and urgency prevents moving the complete file.

- d. Submitting the action document to a committee or a meeting. This method shall be used only when the committee or the individuals present have authority to pass on the action.

2 FAM 1216 OPERATION OF CLEARANCE PROCEDURE

2 FAM 1216.1 Normal

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

The procedure followed by the action officer will vary with the circumstances, but normally the action officer will:

- a. Consult informally with officers in other interested offices before preparing an action document;

- b. Ascertain the views or obtain the approval of own office before presenting an action document to other offices;

- c. Present an action document for clearance at the lowest appropriate level, leaving to the clearing office the decision to refer the matter to a higher level within its own organization, if necessary;

- d. Obtain a clearance from only one individual in any one office;

- e. Present a document to an official above the assistant secretary level only after the prior clearance of the office of the assistant secretary of the bureau which has the action.

2 FAM 1216.2 Emergency

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

In an emergency, normal clearance may be dispensed with, but the action office assumes responsibility for departure from the prescribed process. The action office shall promptly inform the units omitted from the clearance process of the action which has been taken.

2 FAM 1217 RESOLVING CLEARANCE DIFFERENCES

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

Dissenting clearances shall be processed as follows:

a. A clearing office with dissents shall notify the action office promptly of its dissent and reasons for it. The clearing office may submit a memorandum to the action office with copies to the other interested offices.

b. Attempts shall be made to reconcile the differences, first at the action officer level and then at the office and bureau level.

c. When differences cannot be resolved by informal discussion, the action office shall carry the action proposal on through the clearance process for the final decision by the authority superior to the differing offices. In doing so, the action office shall make known to the other clearing offices and to the superior authority the dissent and the memorandum of the dissenting office. Alternatively, the dissenting office may seek to state its case directly to the superior authority.

d. The staff assistants, after seeing that reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the differences, shall insure that the differences are clearly set forth in a separate memorandum when the proposed action is presented to a superior officer for final decision.

2 FAM 1218 RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF CORRESPONDENCE

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

Except for diplomatic and ceremonial correspondence, the bureau or office originating the correspondence shall be responsible for:

a. Reviewing, editing, and approving outgoing correspondence.

b. Insuring completeness and accuracy of contents, the proper security classification or administrative control designation, and proper tone.

c. Complying with all special regulations, guidelines or procedures governing Congressional correspondence.

The Secretariat Staff (S/S-S) is responsible for the review and coordination of diplomatic and ceremonial correspondence, including correspondence with international organizations.

2 FAM 1219 FOLLOW UP ACTION

(TL:GEN-1030; 05-16-1977)

Responsibility for follow up on an action rests with the action office unless it is specifically placed upon another office by the authority taking final action.